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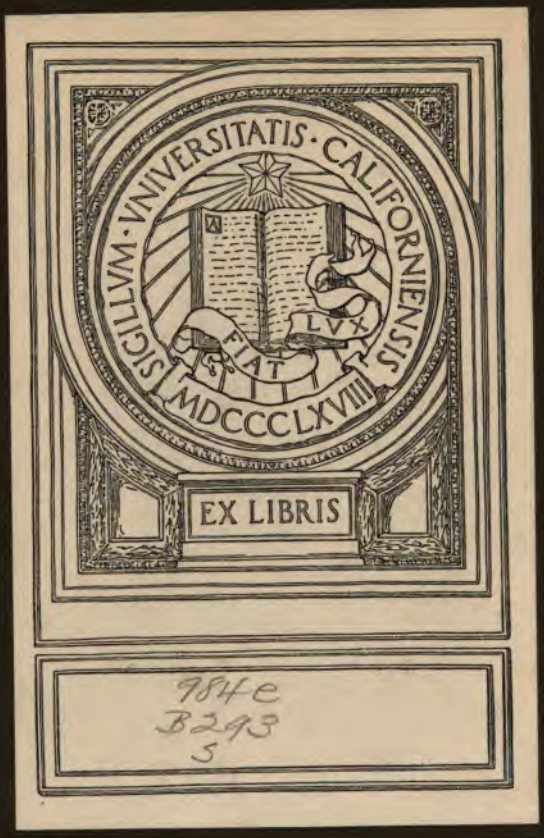
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SHORT SERMONS FOR MYSELF

BY

ARDELIA M. BARTON

SHORT SERMONS FOR MYSELF

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

BY

ARDELIA M. BARTON

SAN FRANCISCO
THE PHILOPOLIS PRESS
MDCCCCXIV

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

MY PRAYER

I would give up my wishes for others' desires, my desires for their needs, my needs for their necessities, my necessities for their distress. I would never trouble any one with my burdens; each has burdens of his own to carry: I would lighten, instead of increasing them. Amen.

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SHORT SERMONS TO MYSELF

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

MY RELIGION.

My religion consists in right living—
  My religion is not one of creeds;
It is loving and helping my neighbor,
  My religion is one of good deeds.

I believe in one God as the Father,
  And the Ruler of heaven, and earth.
I believe that we live on forever,
  And that "death," is to us but re-birth.

I believe in the Christ as a teacher,
  By His teachings much good has been done.
But the Christ never claimed He was Savior,
  Never claimed to be God's *only* Son.

I believe in His teachings so helpful,
  From deception He ever was free.
Though He called upon God as His Father.
  God is also a Father to me.

I believe that God's laws are ne'er broken;
  I believe that they *may* be *transgressed*,
I believe in a life everlasting,
  I believe in that life we are blest.

I believe that God's laws are all perfect,
  And that God could not even them break.
I believe that God *punishes* never,
  And through ignorance our troubles we make.

I have fought, and have gained in life's battles,
And full many life's vic't'ries have won.
I believe in *one* God the Creator,
And that "I and my Father are one."

O my God help me *live* my religion!
But would never of it make a *show*.
I would comfort all those that have trouble;
And would even have pity for foe.

I.

No man liveth unto himself alone.

IF HE ascends the ladder of Life, he lifts some other one up with him, if he descends, he drags some poor unfortunate to the depths with him. There is no dead level in life; we cannot stand still; we either go forward, or backward, and sometime we will be confronted by those we have helped to rise, or fall. *No man liveth unto himself alone.* Even though our desires lead us into some selfishness or indiscretion, we have no right to set an example of evil to some one who, perhaps is weaker in resisting temptation than ourselves, Life's road is crooked even at its best; we must try to straighten some places so that our weaker brother may not fall by the wayside. If we are not *tempted* to do a certain evil, what better are we than our brother who has been *tempted*, and has fallen. It is the temptations that we *overcome*, not those that have no allurements for us that make us stronger and better in the battles of life. Evil is a Will-o'-the-wisp which ever leads us onward to certain destruction, until at last we fall into a bog of despair, and be sure we are not alone in the fall.

No man liveth unto himself alone.

II.

Each one build the wall in front of his own door.

IF WE built a wall for our neighbor, we might build it too high, or too low, too broad, or too narrow. Every one is a law unto himself, or *should* be. Let us not give laws to our neighbor until we have tried to live by them ourselves; if we can even keep the *letter* of the law, we may then venture to lay it down for others; when we realize this fully we will be very chary of our advice, and never on any account tell another what he *should* or should *not* do, unless we are positively sure that our advice is for his well-being and happiness. We should all be self reliant, but not disagreeably independent. The world is a garden of human flowers and weeds; the weeds are entitled to as much sunshine as the flowers; each has its place in the economy of nature, and it is only when cramped in a small garden, that the weeds are crowded out to give the flowers more room, but the weeds may be just as dear to God, and their creation may have caused just as much thought as the flowers. *Consider the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* Every one has the right to cultivate weeds, or flowers in his own garden, and to build the wall in front of his own door, high, or low, broad, or narrow.

III.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these. * *

IF YOU want to do some good in the world do not wait until you are able to build a church, found a school or endow a hospital. You may never be able to do any one of them, but you have the opportunity every day to do some little good; a cup of cold water, a morsel of bread, a visit to the sick or those in trouble. Even a crumb to a hungry bird is something to do in life. In waiting to do some great thing we let slip by the only thing (perhaps) we can do, some small service that will make life a little happier. The entrance to heaven is through the gate of self sacrifice and loving service. If we have money enough to erect a church without any sacrifice to ourselves, what merit is it to us that we do it? Heaven's gate is just as far away and as difficult to enter as though we spent our money in a less pretentious way. A monument to commemorate our generosity may crumble to dust some day, but even a kind thought given to some poor unfortunate lives on forever. *Even as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.*

IV.

Speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they are a rebellious people.

WHAT are His words? *Keep My commandments.* What are His commandments? They can all be summed up in these words, *Love thy neighbor as thyself—Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.* This is the whole Law and the Gospel. Love is the keynote to all good; Hate, the father of all evil. What of miracles? you ask me. It is a miracle that we live. The smallest weed upon the hillside is a miracle. What matters it whether the whale swallowed Jonah or vice versa? What help is it to live by? What lesson are we taught by it? The only miracle in it (according to my light) is that the whale allowed Jonah to visit him as long as he did. I wonder that he waited until he came to dry land before saying farewell to him.

What though Christ should be willing and able to bear our sins, I, for one, am not selfish enough to be willing that He should do so. I will stand or fall by myself. I sincerely believe that I shall have to atone for every sin that I commit, whether in this world, or the next, I do not know, nor do I know what my punishment will be, but I am willing to bear it myself. I do not want any one to suffer for my iniquities. Harriet Beecher Stowe said that she felt as though she were being dissolved into love. Is there anything more beautiful in the Bible? "Dissolved into love." Christ

said, *A new commandment give I unto you. That ye love one another.* If this were the only commandment, and every one lived up to it, there would be no sin in the world, but, alas! we are too selfish. Many are the professors, but few the possessors of unselfish love. Heaven is within us. Golden streets, and harps to play on would not make us happy; we have got to help to make others happy, over there, as well as here, before we can be truly happy ourselves. *Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, you take tithes of mint, anise and cummin, but neglect the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and righteousness.*

V.

I am the Alpha, and Omega, the Beginning and the End. The Resurrection of all Things.

If a man die, shall he live again

NOTHING ever *dies;* though it seems to do so it is again quickened; in other words it is resurrected. Dust to dust was not spoken of the soil; and all *life* is soil, God breathed the breath of life into every thing He made and He made every thing. *Without Him nothing was made which seemeth to have been made.* Every flower that grows is resurrected in its blossom, every tree that brings forth leaves is resurrected in its leaves and sings an anthem of praise to its Redeemer, the Father of all things. The tide comes and goes, ever obeying the laws of its creator; it is resurrected on this shore, and on that. *God is spirit, and we must worship Him, in spirit and in truth.* The sun seems to die to us, but we know that it is resurrected in another part of the earth. *I am the ressurection and the life.*

Though ye walk in the valley and the shadow of death, fear no evil, My rod and My staff they comfort thee.

VI.

The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell from whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one who is born of the spirit.

WHAT is to be born of the spirit? It is when we have found our soul; when we can think for ourselves, not accepting other people's thoughts unless they appeal to our reason. We have a right to interpret "God's Word" by the reason He has given us individually, if He had wished us to understand it as our neighbor does we would have been given our neighbor's reasoning powers. *Every man must stand or fall by himself. What is one's meat, is another's poison.* The handwriting on the wall was for Belshazzar not for us; but there is writing every day upon our souls, which God means that we shall interpret for ourselves. Every flower has its own language though we do not understand it and it is not necessary that we should, God speaks to all His children in words they themselves can comprehend. No one has a right to translate His words but for himself *alone.* If we think that ourselves have *all* the thorns, and that our neighbor has all the roses we are mistaken, there are but few thornless roses in the soul-garden and those that *seem* to *have* them are often wounded by the hidden (from us) thorns.

VII.

There are none perfect, no, not one.

IF YOU are looking for the imperfections in your neighbor, just begin with yourself and you will find that you have no time to cross the street to look for them in your friend. You will find enough work at home in digging the weeds up from your own life garden without peering over the way to see if other people's garden-walks are swept and garnished. You also might be quite shocked if you knew the faults your friends see in yourself when they happen to look into your back yard, or, in other words what you vainly think you hide from your front-door callers. Fear not to have the mirror of your soul so well polished that friend or foe can look therein and scan the *inner* as well as the outer reflection of your thoughts.

VIII.

Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge.

IN OUR ignorance we might question whether *inanimate* (according to preconceived ideas) objects could speak to us, but if our ears were attuned to the voices of nature we should find that everything has a language all its own even though we may not be able to interpret it. The flowers whisper words of love to each other. The day speaks to us in its sunshine and in countless tongues that send forth songs of praise to the great spirit of the universe. In every breath of wind, in every raindrop, in the waterfall, the beating of the ocean's waves upon the shores; in the song of the bird, the hum of all insect life is the voice of God, not only at the awakening of day, but throughout the night. The night showeth forth knowledge in millions of ways that we know not of, nor take heed of when we do know. O that we could translate the language of the day that uttereth speech and the night that showeth knowledge.

IX.

Thou shalt not steal.

NOT to steal material things does not fulfill the commandment fully. There are so many things that are of more value than things we could carry away in our hands. A merchant may not give down weight in weighing his goods, or he may measure a yard a trifle short. What profit is it to a man if he gain the whole world and thereby loses his own soul purity? We make an engagement for a certain hour and may think that it does not matter that we are behind time; it may not to us but perhaps the minutes that we do not value ourselves may be golden to the waiting one. We may speak evil of some one, thus robbing him of his good name. We may withhold from a friend his meed of praise and thus defraud him of needed sunshine in his heart. We sit supinely by and hear some slanderous remark about a friend and do not refute the slander; what is this but stealing? It would not be so cruel if we should put our hand in his pocket and take his purse. There are a thousand different ways to steal and while we would scorn to break the simple commandment in its simple reading we seldom think of the many ways by which it can be broken.

Thou shalt not steal.

X.

Every back is fitted for its burden.

PERHAPS some one who may read this will feel that in their case this is not so, but have they ever experienced the dead calm that comes after a hurricane? It would seem as if all nature was filled with awe at the consequences of its own wild fury. So it is that after some great storm of sorrow sweeps over us seeming to wreck our very life that in the midst of the wild tumult of our agony a wonderful calm comes upon us. Our back has been fitted for its burden; God has given His peace unto us. It is the constant pain of the little pin pricks of life which we cannot overcome that causes us to fall by the way-side. It is a saying. *The last straw broke the camel's back,* but if so, it was because of the countless straws that had been piled upon him before that last one straw-burden which was more than he could bear; his back had been fitted to bear heavy burdens, but *continual dropping will wear even a stone.* It is the little things that we are not prepared for that are the hardest to bear. There are unshed tears that almost break the heart, but the seeming overwhelming torrent of tears may leave us calm and resigned; it may be because out strength is spent, perforce leaving us still; but it is more comforting to think that our back has been fitted for its burden.

XI.

Why seek you to kill me? A man who has brought you a message from God.

IT HAS been nearly two thousand years since the man of Nazareth spoke these words. One of His messages was *Peace and good will unto man.* Are we any nearer to peace and good will today than we were in that long gone past? Seemingly *no.* Then something must be wrong. What is it? There are wars and rumors of war the most of the time. The message was right, therefore *we* must be wrong. What is to be done so that peace will come unto us? Each one must have peace in his own heart and the love which should be in every soul will radiate love to all quarters of the earth. The sunlight is for all peoples, love-light is for all humanity. *Love ye one another.* Begin today to do some little *love-deed,* and, if you do but one a day you will have done three hundred and sixty-five at the end of the year. Is it not worth trying? Three hundred and sixty-five happier people in the world because *you* live in it. Let each day be a "day of judgment" with you and elect yourself your own judge.

Be honest in your judgment,
  Have love within your soul.
Accept the heaven sent message,
  Let it your life control.

Let peace be e'er your watchword,
  Good will to all mankind,
Do as you would be done by,
  Sweet peace you then will find.

XII.

My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?

WAS the cry of Christ in His agony upon the cross. So with us when some great trouble has come into our lives we are apt to feel in our agony that God has forsaken us, but in reality He is nearer than when all is sunshine and hapiness, for, when it is well with us we only think of our happiness. Every flower needs rain as well as sunshine, in fact more rain than sunshine for it can live in the shade and thrive beneath storm-clouds, but perpetual sunshine would be disastrous to all living things. When sorrow's storms come into our lives, our hearts go out in sympathy to our fellow traveller on life's road and we can enter more fully into his soul-life than when naught but sunshine pours into our home and naught but happiness is in our heart. God is more truly with us when our soul seems to be crucified with the numberless crosses that seem to be raised for our crucifixion. But when we have done every duty so far as in us lies, and have borne our troubles manfully we have God with us to comfort and to help, if we will allow Him to do so; we must not think that when troubles come to us that He is far from us and has brought the troubles upon us for some purpose of His own. God never brings trouble upon *us*, His children. Our environments determine our joys or our sorrows. The vibrations of our surroundings bring peace or trouble into our lives and we ourselves are most often the master of our own destiny. To be

sure we make (through our ignorance) many, many mistakes but life cannot be a failure if we have helped to make another life happier by our life. God never forsakes His children, but He may be nearer them sometimes than at other times. God neither forsakes, nor thrusts Himself an unwelcome guest into our soul, but is ever near when we need Him and does not wait for us to call upon Him, but pours oil upon the troubled waters of life until peace enters our soul; and as we bear the cross, so shall we wear the crown.

XIII.

Be ye not troubled * * *

IT IS surprising how much trouble we can find when we are looking for it, suppose we turn over a new leaf and search for happiness instead of unhappiness; we would be even more surprised at the amount of pleasure we would find than we were at the troubles that seemed to engulf us. If we can find no real happiness directly coming into our own life, let us try the experiment of forgetting self and try to make some other life happy and like "bread cast upon the waters" it will return to us a hundredfold, and we shall find that we really derive more happiness in trying to make others happy than in seeking happiness for ourselves. We are too apt to exaggerate little annoyances until they become a power that rules us and seems beyond endurance. We think too much of ourselves, thus making our life too narrow, too circumscribed. Let us broaden out more, think more, do more, fret less and above all (if we cannot help troubling over little things) let us keep our troubles to ourselves and not feed our friends on warmed up complaints, for then, they not only have to bear their own troubles but ours also. Give to the world the roses of life and the thorns scatter broadcast to die of themselves. We can keep the fragrance of life's roses in our own souls. We should keep our individuality also and not always be thinking. "What will people say?" "What will people think of us?" If we did but know it *people* think very little of us. We

must do the very *best* we can in life because we *should* do the best but not for what people may say of us. Keep our soul gardens free from weeds, water them with love and self sacrifice. We must stand or fall by ourselves, therefore must take heed that none fall through us. *He that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

XIV.

He that gathereth more than is meet tendeth to poverty.

I DO not think that this means poverty in material things but poverty of the soul vibrations. To gather wealth for the sake of wealth tends to kill kind thoughts toward our fellow-man and make us forget the distress and unhappiness about us and our wealth is a grave to bury all good impulses in and in consequence of this the earth will rest very heavily upon our graves, for it will be weighted down with selfishness. In the sometime we shall see the mistake we made in hoarding money for we cannot take it with us and the money that we have to leave is very apt to cause dissension among those that inherit it. Why not take some of it with us by giving it away while we have the power to do so. He that giveth on earth gathereth for eternity. Even he that hath *nothing* can give *something;* this may seem an anomoly but there are many things of more value than money or lands, and, often bring more happiness to the recipient than wealth given without the kind loving thought which should always accompany a gift to make it really acceptable. In giving material things we may wound a sensitive heart ofttimes but a kind thought is never lost, nor does it ever wound the pride of friend or foe. So, when we give we must do so because we love to give, not because it is our duty to do so or that it is expected that we should and he that giveth unto others gathereth unto himself.

XV.

Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

NATURE is constantly thus calling to her weary and heavy laden children. When we feel borne down with our cares and are heavy laden with troubles let us try to come unto nature, she will encircle us with her arms and we shall obtain rest upon her loving bosom. Even in a city there is some spot where we can commune with nature, our loving mother. The soft wind will cool our aching head and kiss the wrinkles from our brow. The fragrance of the flowers will fill our soul with harmony and we can find rest beneath the branches of some tree by the way-side. If we think that we are heavy laden with trouble let us try to forget self; look up at the beautiful heavens, think of the mighty waters and the countless worlds swinging in unknown space. We will then think how small we are and of what little moment are our puny selves in the great economy of nature. *Work* (for good) *while the day lasts for the night cometh when no man can work.* We have no time nor right to sit idly by and nurse our troubles.

If we seek peace, we peace will find,
And a sure cure for all distress.
There is a balm for every woe
For mother Nature will us bless.

XVI.

And sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

MOST assuredly it does. Can we conceive of God changing a law that He made in the beginning of creation so as to punish the unjust man by withholding from him the rain or sunshine? Nay! Nay! We are all blessed alike and if we do not accept the blessings that are around and about us it is because we do not choose to do so or through ignorance of the laws of God, we are not able to do so. *We now see through glass darkly* but sometime our eyes will be opened and we shall see face to face the blessings we might have had. The sunshine is ours if we do not shut it out of our hearts and homes, but we can have the clouds if we prefer them, God neither forces happiness upon us, nor does He send trouble into our lives to punish us for being unjust, we punish ourselves by every sin we commit, by the loss of our self-respect. *Choose ye this day whom to serve.* Happiness or Sorrow; they stand side by side stretching forth their hands to be guests in our homes and hearts. To be sure there are always some clouds in life's sky, but the clouds always have silver linings. Let us look for the sunshine but if clouds come they should strengthen our character and we must not weaken ourselves by complaining that our less just neighbor has as much, or, perhaps more of the good things of life than we. *The rain falls upon the just and the unjust alike.*

XVII.

THE RELIGION OF LOVE.

He that scattereth abroad gathereth unto himself the result of what he hath scattered.

IF HE hath scattered tares he will sometime be pierced by thorns; if he hath scattered roses their perfume will return to him upon the breezes of loving gratitude from those who have been blessed by their fragrance. If we have not the religion of Love we can believe in every religion of the world and yet be *as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.* If we sow the seeds of true unselfish Love we can never reap a harvest of Hate. Love is the key that will unlock even the stronghold of Hate and the inner tabernacle of the hitherto unlocked soul will be swept and garnished for our reception. *He that sows the wind will reap the whirlwind.* Let us begin today and if we sow but *one* seed of Love tomorrow we will reap a rich harvest of Love and it will thrive and constantly sending out its tendrils will eventually kill out the noxious weed of Hate. *He that scattereth abroad gathereth unto himself the result of what he hath scattered.*

XVIII.

Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.

THE heart is a citadel with many doors opened by sympathy or selfishness. Perhaps there is a secret or private door that is seldom opened nor is it known to the outside world; but some day there may be a low knock at the door and our eyes will be opened and we shall see the selfishness that has kept this door locked to the hungry soul who would fain come in and sup with us and we now realize how much sweeter the food is when we share it with others. *Man cannot live by bread alone.* The animal part of him requires material things to sup on but the spiritual part must have spiritual food and if we have some morsel of soul-sustenance that we are keeping to ourselves hoarding it in the recesses of our heart let us now open the hidden door and freely give of what has been given us by a Higher Power. Giving thus does not impoverish us but returns to us a hundred fold a full cup and running over. Have we mislaid the key that unlocks the treasure-door of thought-food, if so, let us search until we find it and then scatter abroad that which we have found, it may fall upon fallow ground, that is only waiting for the seed that we may sow and which none other can for no two souls have the same kind of seed; to one is given one kind to another is given that which may be just as good but bearing different fruit and each kind

will thrive in soil that is best adapted for it. We must sow that which is given to us for none other will blossom in the gardens of our hearts. Yet we must take heed that we do not lock the granaries against those that are seeking our soul-seed and are knocking at our door for it; we must also take care that we give not unto them the seeds of error, for, whatsoever we sow, that shall we reap. As for me, I have entered into the vestibule of The Most High. I have found the key to an *obscure* door perhaps, but the door is high enough and broad enough for all to enter who knock and wish to sup with me.

XIX.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.

SO FAR as we know, man on this earth is the highest manifestation of God's handiwork; but there are countless worlds besides ours. Is it not just possible that there may be much higher types of life on some of them than on ours? This earth may be but a kindergarten for other planets. There may be immortals living on some of these worlds, who have not known death nor corruption. *The mortal must put on immortality, and corruption must put on incorruption;* these words were meant for us, for death and corruption is our legacy. God's power is infinite, therefore He is able to create life that knows not death. Perhaps on some world He has made for Himself companions and co-workers with Himself. We judge God's power by what we see and know of this world. We have too much self-esteem when we think ours is the only world of life, and man, as we know him, is God's greatest creation. Sometime, perhaps, we shall be able to converse with people living on other planets; if so, it will be almost speaking to God face to face. This is a world of tears, with just enough happiness in it to give us a foretaste of heaven. It would seem that tears were our legacy, for they come to us at birth; we have inherited tears from our weeping mothers, and we shall do so until the world laughs more and weeps less. Oh, that we were able to grasp the full meaning of this—Laugh more, and weep less.

XX.

In the beginning was God.

IN THE beginning.—In the highest flight of imagination can one conceive of a beginning? If there was a time when there was nothing, there must be an end. What, and when, will be the end? What was God doing before He began to create? Where was He? Where will He be after the end? Will He begin all over again, making new worlds to destroy again, creating new life to die again? O, the mystery of creation! It never has been solved, nor will it ever be, for man will come, and man will go, from whence, to where, no one can know. We asked not to come, we have no power over death. We can never answer the why and the wherefore. Shall we be able to do so when we are on the other side of life? I think not, for when the mystery is solved what more would there be for us? I doubt whether we ever see God, for were we to see Him there would be nothing more to look forward to. It is the ever looking forward and upward that gives zest to life, either here or hereafter. There never was a beginning; there never will be an end. Almighty Power in the past, in the present, in the future. Almighty Power above, around, about us. We know it not, nor shall we ever know it throughout all eternity —but now that mine eyes have seen the glory of God, my soul doubts not but that His loving mercy endureth from everlasting to everlasting.

XXI.

Work while the day lasts, for when the night cometh, no man can work.

I will say unto my soul arise, why sleepest thou?

The vineyard is ready, but the laborers are few.

GATHER the fruit of knowledge while yet you may, put it in the press, and give of the wine to the thirsty, let them drink their fill even unto intoxication, for when one hath once drunk the wine of knowledge he will come again and again, and be nourished and exhilirated by that which doeth no evil; each sup from the wine-cup of thought will fill his soul with joy unspeakable; there are no poisonous dregs in this cup. Come, all ye who are thirsty, and drink freely of the wine of everlasting life and knowledge. The cup is never empty.

XXII.

The tongue is an unruly member.

ALLOWING this to be so, what is the remedy? It would hardly be advisable to cut it out, and really it is not the tongue that is to blame after all; it is but the obedient servant of the powers back of it; the tongue simply obeys what the brain suggests to it, and the brain is but the servant of the heart and soul. Now, if the heart is pure, and the soul filled with noble thoughts, the tongue would do their bidding and only say kind, and loving things. Let us begin at the foundation of matters, have all the machinery in good working order, and the material that we put in the mill of life be without blemish, pure, and undefiled, then the tongue, obedient as ever, will give to the world nothing offensive nor opprobrious; no deception; in fact, nothing that the world could condemn or censure; and it would only do the bidding of God (the good) within us.

XXII.

The tongue is an unruly member.

THANK God; my mother taught me to bridle my tongue, if for no other reason than to protect myself; for we may be very sure that people have no better opinion of us than we have of them, and if we indulge in the habit of speaking evil of our neighbor, it might be a good lesson for us sometime to hear what they say of us. We are too apt to see only the good in ourselves, while others see the imperfections. *He that thinketh he is perfect, look within; there is no truth in him. We are prone to evil as the sparks are to fly upward.* I am not interested in hearing the faults of my neighbors discussed; I should much prefer to hear of their good qualities. I cannot help thinking that there is something radically wrong in the man or woman who always sees the worst side of his acquaintances, and retailing his opinion of them to others. I always feel that he is judging others by himself; so please, friends, do not tell me what you think of my friends, unless you think well of them. By remembering this advice and abiding by it, I shall have a much better opinion of yourself. I do not wish to be obliged to listen to a tirade of abuse of my friends or neighbors.

A word to the wise is sufficient.

XXIII.

Faith, Hope, and Charity. The greatest of these is Charity.

I DO not think this means wholly charity in giving of our substance. *Charity is long-suffering, and is kind; is not puffed up, vaunteth not itself.* We must have charity for other people's failings; there may be some reason that we do not know of that is the cause of people doing thus and so, and probably were we placed in the same position as they we might do worse. *Charity is kind, vaunteth not itself.* If we do things a little better than our neighbor, or have a better home, or things than they, it is not becoming that we make a display of what we do or of what we have. We must live a simple life and try to make the world better by our living in it. In giving of our worldly goods, I think the donor, not the recipient, should be the one to give thanks and feel gratitude, for it is most assuredly *better to give than to receive.* It could not be expected of us, nor would it be right to impoverish ourselves to do for others, for then we should become burdens to our friends; but let us do what is reasonable, and vaunt not ourselves for doing it. Gold and silver are of the earth, earthy, and perhaps the more we gather to ourselves the more earthy we become. *Charity is long suffering, and is kind. It is better to suffer evil than to do evil.* It may not be taken literally that we must turn our left cheek also to the one who smites us on the right, but we need not retaliate in kind for an injury. *A soft answer turn-*

eth away wrath. Do good for evil, and, though an adversary may not be much benefited by a kindness from us, *we* are happier ourselves for doing the kindness. *Charity is not puffed up.* What better are we than our neighbors, though we may be born in affluence and he in poverty. It is what we are in character, not what we possess in gold and silver that make of us joint heirs of all good (God).

XXIV.

Thou shalt surely die.

DEATH. What a blessed gift to man. Of all God's gifts, death is the best. What if we were doomed to live forever on earth? The wildest imagination could not conceive of anything more horrible. Even if, with life forever on earth, we were given eternal youth and health—we should get so tired of it all; would long for a change; some other state of existence. Even an endless, dreamless sleep would be more preferable than endless life on earth. We now have a hope of heaven. If the hope is fulfilled we shall be happier far than we are on earth; if not, we shall have a dreamless sleep and know no more forever. *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?*

XXV.

He that is without sin cast the first stone.

HOW many stones would be cast, I wonder, if only those that were without sin were allowed to cast them? I think that the majority of us would find the stones too heavy to even lift, to say nothing of throwing them. We should never speak ill of another until we are *perfect* ourselves, and if we *were perfect*, we would have no desire to speak evil of any one, but on the contrary we would feel so sorry for the imperfect one that we would try to hide his failings instead of publishing them to the world.

O, mortal man pray look within,
Mayhap you'll find so much of sin
That others' faults you will not see:
No one from sin is wholly free.

Truly, *The tongue is an unruly member*, but if we sincerely try to govern it we shall succeed, and, *he who governs himself is greater than he who governs a nation.*

Soil not your tongue with slanderous words;
Speak well, or not at all
Of friend, or foe, no matter which—
For we are brothers all.

XXVI.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

ENTER into the joys that thou hast prepared for thyself, by doing every duty that is set before thee. Be faithful in small things, and thou wilt be prepared to meet and overcome every obstacle that may be in the path of thy duty, and thou wilt not be found wanting when some great trial may come unto thee. If thou dost not live up to right principles in the smallest of thy everyday affairs, when some *great* principle comes up before thee to decide, thou wilt find that thou hast been sadly unreliable in the little things of life. It is wrong to think that it does not matter if a small duty is neglected. Remember that mountains are made from grains of sand and oceans from drops of water. Be thou faithful over little things, and thou shalt be made lord over every emergency that arises to confront thee. If at any time thou art in doubt as to what thy duty may be, sit quietly for a minute or more and look into thine own heart, and think what thou wouldst wish to have done unto thyself under the same circumstances, and then do what thou wouldst wish done unto thee, and it will then be impossible to make a mistake. If every one lived up to the *Golden Rule*, there would be no sin in the world.

XXVII.

To the unknown God.

WHO knoweth God? We knew Him not before we came into existence, and perhaps we shall not know Him throughout an eternity of eternities. Methinks should we come into God's presence there would be no more for us to strive for; every desire would be fulfilled; there would be nothing more to hope for, and, *Were it not for hope, the heart would die.* And, too, were we able to solve the problem of life and death, would we live any better? Would we die any happier? The very mystery by which we are ever surrounded is an incentive for us to try to find out for ourselves the riddle of the universe, and, though we may never know much more about the mystery of creation than we do now, yet the thinking about these things will serve to make us forget self, thus doing some good anyway. We know this much, that life is an endless chain, from an atom up to God; not one link missing—perfect in all its construction. As time comes and goes, we shall be forgotten; no one will remember that we ever lived; but the works that we do will live on forever and ever, by leaving their impress upon coming generations. Let us be wise in our building. Though man has bound light and space, sound and thought, and, almost, spirit, yet he has only stepped into the vestibule of knowledge. God is still *unknown.*

XXVIII.

No greater love hath man than this, to lay down his life for his friend.

TAKEN without much thought this would seem very unselfish and lovable in a man to lay down his life for his friend; but I think there are cases when it would be more unselfish in a man to *live* for his friend. *Dead*—he could do nothing, comparatively speaking, but alive—he could do O, so much, if he were so disposed. All have burdens to carry, and sometimse another is able to help carry some burden that would be all too heavy for one to carry alone; but, by two carrying it, it would be light for both. I have known the father of a family to commit suicide because he was not brave enough to carry the load that seemed to weight him down, never thinking how much heavier the load would be for his poor wife because of his dropping his share of it. Would it not be *greater love* for his family to *live* for them than to *die* for them? There are unselfish cases, when a man (to save his friend from certain destruction) might risk his life and thereby lose it, to save his friend, but this is a different thing entirely. Be you brave enough to live, so long as you can help to bear the burdens of others.

XXIX.

What are we that God is mindful of us?

WE ARE a part of God's great Universe, a little lower than the angels, a little higher than the animals. We think, we talk, we build; so do they, only in a different language, and their home building is more suitable for them than ours would be for them. We are but one link in the chain of God's love. We may be a little nearer the "First Great Cause," but perhaps not loved the more nor no more necessary for the completeness of the one grand whole. Take one link from the chain, and it falls asunder; one strand broken, the whole chain is weakened. The chain began with God, and is not complete until it is finished in the atom. We, perhaps, are no more essential to the fulfillment of the Law than the atom. It is right that we have a just appreciation of our powers and consequence, but we must not think that the world would cease to exist if we were not in it. The little things in life are just as important as the great. We could not build a palace without the laborer, and we would not begin at its dome, but at the foundation, and have the foundation of stone, not sand, then, though the raging tempest break over the palace it will not fall; its base is well founded and secure. So with life—have the foundation built upon the rock of integrity, not on the sands of evil, and then though the storms of adversity may beat upon us, and though we may show the scars of battle, if we

have been brave and loyal to our colors, we shall stand erect and triumphant on the rock of our foundation. The Power that put us here, the Power that needs us, as much as we need the Power.

XXX.

MAN is the creator of his own universe. His acts, his speech, his thoughts, are the stars and planets by which he is surrounded—he is the center. If he does wrong, the whole universe is affected, thrown from its equilibrium, as it were. Anger is a meteor which rushes on with lightning rapidity, and wherever it falls it scorches the one on whom it rests. A happy simile is a sunbeam. A frown or a tear is a thunder-cloud that obscures the bright rays of the sun. A thought, even, will make some one happy or sad. We are arbiters of our own lives, and, in fact, the whole world, for, although what we may do seemingly reaches only those about us, yet, in reality life is an endless chain, one link broken or weakened and the chain is almost useless. Those nearest us are affected by our every thought and they will influence those nearest them, and so on throughout the whole world. Would we not be more careful in what we *do* and what we *think*, if we would only realize fully how far our influence governs the world at large? Much evil is done through thoughtlessness. Let us try to keep the sunlight unobscured in our universe, either by evil deeds or thoughts.

XXXI.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Thy rod and Thy staff shall comfort me.

WE LOOK upon the pale, still face of one whom we love, and we say he is dead; he has gone from me forever. I am left alone; how can I bear it; there is naught but desolation everywhere. "He is not dead, but sleepeth." He will awake refreshed from a dreamless sleep; no more pain; no more trouble; glorified in his new body, in his new conditions. Let us be unselfish in our love and think only of his happiness, free from all that bound him down; no more sickness; no more pain; no more struggling with earth conditions. We shall miss him, most assuredly, but cannot we derive a little comfort in knowing that he is through with it all, and that he will be "over there with outstretched arms to enfold us in a loving embrace?" Blessed was the morning of his resurrection; blessed will be the time when we can walk again in the paths of eternal happiness together, when our faith hath made us whole.

Unhappy child be comforted,
  Have faith, have hope, have love,
Divided though thou art on earth,
  Thou'rt joined again above.

'Tis but a moment, but a breath,
  So quickly time doth go;
A sob, a tear, and then we part,
  But life is not all woe.

There is so much that we can do—
  Some comfort we can get
In sharing others' griefs and woes,
  Though we can ne'er forget
The loved companion of our home,
  The toiler by our side,
The one we trusted ever, aye,
  In every walk our guide.

O, do not grieve too much for him;
  It keeps him close to earth.
Though thou art parted for a time,
  Thou'lt meet at thy re-birth.

XXXII.

Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.

I THINK that (as a rule) we are too much afraid to speak and let our friends know what we believe. I do not mean that we should be forever thrusting our thoughts and beliefs before people, but by being afraid to let our friends know what we think we may be depriving them of just what they need; they may be troubled at the things that come up in their minds, but having no one to whom they dare confide, they keep their thoughts to themselves, and, finally, through fear that their friends may take exception at what they believe, they bury their (perhaps) inspirations in a grave so deep they can never be resurrected, and they never are quite happy again, for when one has begun to think for himself, and then hides his light under a bushel, the last stage of that one is worse than the first. *Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.* I know of what I speak, for I have been *afraid to speak*, and was never truly happy until I had the courage of my convictions and was not afraid to let the world (if necessary) know that I had found peace in believing, even though my belief was directly opposed to the belief of my friends—and, strange to say, I have not lost one friend by being perfectly frank and honest in acknowledging that I differed from them, but on the contrary have been filled with surprise at the number that were in the same thought as myself, and only needed encouragement.

XXXIII.

And the book of life shall be opened.

BUT we open it ourselves, or, rather, it is never shut. If our spiritual eyes could be opened we could see our every deed, and our every thought even, photographed in indelible colors on memory's wall. Even tears cannot obliterate an evil deed committed. We can never forgive ourselves for any wrong we do; it is just possible that if we can prevent some poor unfortunate from committing the same deed, we may be able to forgive ourselves—I cannot tell, I do not know.

Children should be taught before they are born the law of cause and effect. Retribution is the aftermath of evil; happiness is the reward of well-doing. Each man is a law unto himself, and is also his own judge, and I think he would judge himself more severely than anyone else could pronounce judgment. Could parents realize that their deeds and thoughts were a lifelong legacy to their unborn children, I think they would be more careful as to how they lived and as to what they thought. O, that our lives could stand before us, one grand illuminated text, no cloud of evil to darken its brilliancy as painted by ourselves. But above all, be not *over-solicitous* of self, for selfishness will dim the lustre of the greatest good painted in our life picture. Even though the picture on memory's wall is entirely made up of *self*, selfishness should hold no part in it, for the very kindest act that we may do can be dimmed or entirely obscured by selfishness.

I have been thinking a great deal lately whether we really *do* feel sorry for any one when we think we do. How can we feel sympathy for any one who has a headache, or a heartache, if we have never had either? How can we feel sorry for any one who is hungry if we have never suffered from hunger ourselves? How can we pity any one who is cold if we have always had a fire to sit by when we needed it? What does one know of the Arctic cold who has always lived in the Tropics? The seeming heartlessness often seen in people, perhaps is, after all, but ignorance. What people do not suffer themselves they cannot comprehend. Try to make a child (who is just beginning to talk) understand the meaning of the word *pain;* it would be just as misunderstandable to him as a sentence in Greek. A cross is very light for us to bear, when some one else is staggering beneath its weight. If we try to lift it ourselves we shall then realize how heavy it is, but not until then. Perhaps the reason that Christ had so much love and sympathy for mankind was that He Himself *was a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief.*

XXXIV.

And it repented the Lord that He had made man on earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.

GOD is omniscient, therefore from the beginning. He knew the end. Being omnipotent, He knew when He created man that he would sin the first opportunity that presented itself. God planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden (man's home), and told Adam (so it is written) that the *day* he ate thereof he would surely die. Adam ate of it, and lived a number of years afterward. When God found that Adam had disobeyed Him, He said, now, lest perchance he puts forth his hand and partakes of the tree of life and becomes as one of us, let us banish him from the garden. Now, suppose that Adam had first partaken of the tree of life, it would seem that God would have been helpless as regards man. First, having eaten of the tree of life, he would have lived forever; then, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would have been even as God. What then? Man *one* with *God*. Verily there would have been war in heaven.

XXXV.

IF YOU prize *friendship* more than *fame*, do not strive to become famous. Many (otherwise good people) do not enjoy having their friends in a higher seat than themselves, and show their feelings by ignoring entirely or noticing the gifts of friends with supercilious criticism, which is plainly noticeable to all, and the cause recognizable also. Can we not be generous enough to be glad when our friends succeed, even though we may have to sit at their feet? Perchance we may shine by *reflected* light if we cannot by our *own*. Envy is the wife of malice. Hatred is the child of the pair. Let us not harbor the trio in our hearts and homes, for we little know what the grandchildren will be.

XXXVI.

The Truth shall make you free.

Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.

WE WHO are seeking the Truth and are but in the vestibule of knowledge, knock at every door: at last the right one will open unto you and you will enter and come into your own. *The Truth shall make you free. Put not your hand to the plow and look back.* Sometime a thought will come to you that will almost strike terror to your soul, Fear not; another door has been opened unto you; enter, and sit at the table of knowledge; you may find the Truth, and evermore be free. Every doubt will be dispelled, and some day a door will be opened and you will be ushered into the very presence of the Most High. *The Truth shall make you free.* Be not afraid of what others may think or say of you; it is *your* door; enter.

BENEDICTION

And now may the Peace that you have earned by your Love abide with you forever and forever.

So mote it be.

A. M. B.

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